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ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Human rights and unilateral coercive measures

Report of the Secretary-General

GE.00-16105 (E)

Introduction

1. This report is submitted pursuant to Commission on Human Rights resolution 2000/11 of 17 April 2000, in which the Commission requested the Secretary-General to bring the resolution to the attention of all Member States and to seek their views and information on the implications and negative effects of unilateral coercive measures on their populations, and to submit a report thereon to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-seventh session.

2. In accordance with paragraph 11 (b) of the resolution, the Secretary-General, in a note verbale dated 31 August 2000, invited Member States to transmit information relevant to the subject matter. As of 25 November 2000 one reply had been received, from the Government of Cuba. This reply is reproduced below. Any additional replies will be submitted in an addendum to the present report.

REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]
[27 September 2000]

3. The implementation of unilateral coercive measures that are not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations is one of the worst and most serious violations of human rights that can be committed against the populations of the countries affected. These measures are used with the intention of restricting the right to self-determination of the peoples of developing countries and are generally implemented as a key part of the strategies for dominance of the main imperialist Powers, particularly by the Government of the United States of America, which is applying economic sanctions to 35 countries, to which can be added the sanctions taken by that country's individual States and at the local level against a further 18 countries.

4. Cuba has been the victim of a criminal and genocidal blockade imposed by the United States for 40 years, which has been roundly and overwhelmingly condemned by States Members of the United Nations at the General Assembly. The damage to the Cuban people has been fully documented by the Cuban authorities and published in the Secretary-General's reports on the subject. However, the documentation on the impact of the blockade imposed on the Cuban people by the Government of the United States is not limited to that submitted by the Cuban authorities.

5. On 3 January 2000, a number of social, community and student organizations from Cuban civil society lodged a claim with the People's Provincial Court of the City of Havana against the Government of the United States for economic damage caused to Cuba, claiming $121 billion in reparation and compensation for the Cuban people. During the judicial proceedings dealing with this claim, hundreds of witnesses and pieces of evidence were produced, enabling the Court, with full respect for due process, to find that the Government of the United States was liable under civil law for the unlawful acts carried out against Cuba and to order it to pay reparation or compensation to the Cuban people in the aforementioned amount.

6. The strategic objective of the blockade imposed by the United States on Cuba has been nothing less than the destruction of the process of political, social and economic change undertaken by the Cuban people in the exercise of their right to self-determination. To that end, the Government of the United States and its top leaders in nine successive presidential administrations, together with members of the legislative branch, civil servants and official or unofficial staff of that Government, have resorted to every kind of political pressure, attempts at diplomatic isolation, propaganda activities, encouraging defections and illegal emigration, spying, economic warfare and various forms of physical aggression, including subversion, terrorist activities and sabotage, biological warfare, encouraging armed groups to fight against our country, orchestrating hundreds of plans to assassinate the top leaders of the Revolution, military harassment, the threat of nuclear extermination and even a direct attack by an army of mercenaries.

7. For almost 40 years, successive administrations of the Government of the United States have applied a policy of systematic economic aggression against Cuba. That policy, in its scope and persistence, in the involvement in it at the highest level of the executive and legislative branches of the United States Government, in its use of a vast arsenal of economic and political tools as weapons of aggression, and in the extraterritorial nature of its provisions and their application to third countries, and with the unfulfilled strategic aim of breaking down the Cuban people's resistance by trying to force it, through poverty, want, sickness and hunger, to abandon the socio-economic and political system adopted by it in a free and sovereign manner with the triumph of the Cuban Revolution, is a policy of economic aggression which is not limited to a simple embargo applicable to bilateral economic relations but which actually amounts to economic warfare. The economic blockade is applied in blatant violation of the people's right to life, well-being and development, without distinction as to age, sex, race, religious beliefs, social status or political ideas.

8. The will of the international community continues to be ignored by the United States in its policy of blockading Cuba. Far from ending the blockade, every year the United States adopts new laws, measures and provisions to tighten it. Cuba is of the unshakeable conviction that, in the present international situation, it is more than ever necessary for the international community to continue to condemn strongly the use of such practices and to take urgent action to ensure effective compliance with the decisions of the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights.